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## **Yucca Mountain Nuclear Repository & Transportation Corridor**

**May 3, 2004**

**Q. What began the BLM's current involvement in the Yucca Mountain project?**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) issued a *Federal Register* notice on December 29, 2003, in reaction to a withdrawal application from the Department of Energy (DOE). That notice effectuates a two-year segregation so the DOE can study in detail and site its proposed Caliente route for a branch rail line. Rights-of-way work is expected to follow.

**Q. How much land is involved?**

DOE asked to withdraw about 308,600 acres of land in preparation for a rail line called the Caliente corridor. The width of the withdrawal is about one mile wide. Since the rail line route is not defined, the *Federal Register* notice approximated the land encompassed by the corridor and listed sections which may be wholly or partially involved.

**Q. What was the reason for the withdrawal?**

The withdrawal will protect the proposed corridor from mining claims and other uses for about two years. In the past when public projects or parks have been proposed, mining claims have been filed, creating encumbrances on the land. Individuals who file claims have hopes of being paid to relinquish these claims.

**Q. Does a withdrawal indicate ownership?**

No, the BLM still retains the right to authorize additional non-conflicting uses on that public land.

**Q. Could right-of-ways be an alternative to a withdrawal?**

It is anticipated that DOE could file rights-of-way applications on the specific route it desires. At that time, DOE would file a map showing specific routes. Rights-of-way often are granted for 20 or 30 years.

The BLM's notice to add land use planning as an issue to the scoping being conducted by the Department of Energy states that an alternative to the issuance of a withdrawal under section 204 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 could be a linear right of way under Title V of that same act.

**Q. What kind of public involvement has there been in this process?**

Even though there has been public involvement in the environmental impact statement (EIS) prepared by the DOE for the repository, there will be additional public involvement for this rail corridor. BLM is requesting a Notice of Intent be published in early May

2004 in the *Federal Register* which would add land use planning as an issue to the scoping being conducted by the DOE.

Q Where and when are the public meetings?

The DOE has set meeting for May 3 in Armagosa Valley, May 4 in Goldfield, May 5 in Caliente, May 12 in Reno, and May 17 in Las Vegas. The BLM will sponsor meetings in Tonopah on June 22 and in Pioche on June 23.

Q. Why does BLM need to issue a notice about the May and June meetings?

The DOE does not have the same regulations as the BLM for planning or for withdrawals. Meeting notification processes are also different. The notices in the *Federal Register* are in keeping with the *Code of Federal Regulations* at Part 1600 and at Part 2300.

Q. Why is BLM involved in changing its planning documents?

The line presently runs through three BLM district offices, and all of those land use plans would need to be amended to address the proposed construction, operation and maintenance of a branch rail line. The documents are the Caliente and Schell Management Framework Plans and the Tonopah and Las Vegas Resource Management Plans.

Q. How does this relate to the Yucca Mountain repository itself?

If the Nuclear Regulatory Commission issues a license for the construction and operation of a repository, this Caliente corridor is the DOE's favored mode of transportation for shipping waste to the site.

Q. Will all of the shipments be by rail?

No, the DOE stated in April 2004, that it had selected the use of rail for the majority of spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste, but that because of the availability of transportation modes at some storage facilities, some shipments might require transport by road.

Q. Where can I learn more about the Yucca Mountain project and the State of Nevada's legal cases opposing the building of a high level nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain?

The Yucca Mountain project is explained at [www.ocrwm.doe.gov](http://www.ocrwm.doe.gov). The State of Nevada site is [www.state.nv.us](http://www.state.nv.us). A link to Yucca Mountain is located at the right side of the State of Nevada home page.